Growth of India's Exports

2770. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the annual compound rate of growth of India's exports during the decade 1981-82 to 1990-91 and the compound rate of growth in the seven years beginning with 1991-92;

(b) the extent of depreciation in the value of the Indian rupee since June, 1991; and

(c) whether any negative relationship is establishable between India's export growth and the depreciating rupee?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMA KRISHNA HEGDE): (a) The annual rate of growth of India's exports during the decade 1981-82 to 1990-91 in dollar terms are:

Year	Rate of growth (%)
1981-82	2.6
1982-83	4.6
1983-84	3.8
1984-85	4.5
1985-86	9.9
1986-87	9.4
1987-88	24.1
1988-89	15.6
1989-90	19.0
1990-91	9.1

The compound growth rates of India's exports during the decade 1981-82 to 1990-91 and during the seven year period 1991-92 to 1997-98 in dollar terms are 7.6% and 9.6% respectively.

(b) Between June, 1991 and May 1998, the rupee depreciated by around 48%.

(c) Exchange rate depreciation does help to improve export competitiveness. But there are other factors equally important for increasing export competitiveness *viz.*, productivity, product quality, international demand, trade growth etc. Also, the effect of rupee depreciation would vary among various export sectors depending upon import intensity, value addition, demand elasticity etc.

Quantitative Restrictions on Imports

2771. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether under Article XVIII-B of the Marrakesh Treaty the developing countries are entitled to retain quantitative restrictions on imports for balance of payment reasons;

(b) whether a number of advanced industrial countries led by the United States of America have been pressurising our Government to waive its prerogative under Article XVIII-B; and

(c) the nature of measures Government have undertaken to protect national interests in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMA KRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Under Article XVIII-B, developing countries are entitled to impose and maintain quantitative restrictions on imports if they have balance of payments difficulties, provided the import restrictions so imposed or maintained shall not exceed those necessary (a) to forestall the threat of, or the stop a serious decline in its monestary reserves or (b) in the case of a country with inadequate monetary reserves, to achieve a reasonable rate of increase in its reserves.

(b) Only United State of America has filed a case before the WTO for settlement of dispute on early removal of quantitative restriction on import. All others have worked out mutually agreed solutions with India.

(c) The Government has appointed reputed lawyers to defend India's case.

The Attorney General himself is monitoring and overseeing India's defence.

Auction by Tobacco Board

2772. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any auction offices or auction platforms of Tobacco Board have been closed down in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka in the last two years;

(b) whether it is a fact that farmers in remote areas are demanding the opening of more sub-centres for tobacco purchase by the Tobacco Board; and

(c) the steps proposed to meet this demand?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMA KRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Two auction platforms (Kapavaram and Chilakaluripots) operated in 1995 were closed in 1996 in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) and (c) There have been some demands from tobacco growers regarding opening of additional auction platforms in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. As and when such requests are received, the same are considered by the Tobacco Board and if the quantity of tobacco produced is sufficient and adequate infrastructure is available, additional platforms are operated.

Collaboration of Tobaccoo Board with CTRI

2773. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Tobacco Board has collaborated with the CTRI in developing a fuel-saving tobacco bran for use in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details of this collaboration;

(c) what are the areas where the Tobacco Board has collaborated with CTRI, Rajahmundary in 1997-98;

(d) whether greater cooperation will be there to improve the extension facilities for tobacco farmers in Andhra Pradesh by the Tobacco Board with CTRI; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMA KRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. CTRI in collaboration with Tobacco Board has developed insulation of barn roof with a mixture of thermocole and cement. With this, a saving of 30% in fuel consumption has been achieved. Further, trials are in progress for development of insulation of barn from inside with mineral wool and G.I. sheet.

(c) to (e) Areas of collaboration of Tobacco Board with CTRI are:—

(1) conducting training programmes to field staff of Tobacco Board and tobacco growers in improved production technology at different phases of tobacco growth.

(2) conducting on-farm trials to demonstrate latest methods of crop production and varietal trails to test the performance of pipe-line varieties under field conditions.

(3) distribution of literature in the form of Booklets, pamphlets and news items on improved package of practices to the farmers.

(4) Supply of pure seed of high yeilding varieties.

(5) monitoring the pesticide residue levels in different areas and suggesting suitable measures to eleminate the residues.

(6) technical guidance for implementing quality and yield improvement programme.